

## CHAPTER 2

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### ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST AND DISCUSSION

The determination of whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment is a critical step in the CEQA process. Consistent with *CEQA Statutes Section 21083* (Significance Guidelines) and *CEQA Guidelines Section 15065* (Mandatory Findings of Significance), significance levels as provided in the checklist are generally defined as follows:

- *Potentially Significant Impact* applies where there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. The CEQA Guidelines define “significant effect” as “...a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic and aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment. A social or economic change related to a physical change may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant” (CEQA Guidelines, 15382).
- *Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated* applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The EIR must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level.
- *Less Than Significant Impact* applies where the project creates no significant impacts, only less than significant impacts.
- *No Impact* applies where a project does not create an impact in that category. “No Impact” answers need to be adequately supported by information which shows that the impact simply does not apply to project.

Each of the following technical sections include a detailed discussion of the current environmental setting, regulatory considerations, impacts of the proposed project and alternatives, and, where appropriate, mitigation measures. The discussion and evaluation of the cumulative impacts of the proposed project is provided in Section 2.17 *Mandatory Findings of Significance*. The impact determinations are based on the criteria provided in the CEQA checklist, which is included in the beginning of each section. In the event specific additional considerations or details are required, or variations to the CEQA checklist are considered, this information is discussed under the related impact or mitigation presentations in each section.